

CORONATION DAY

1953



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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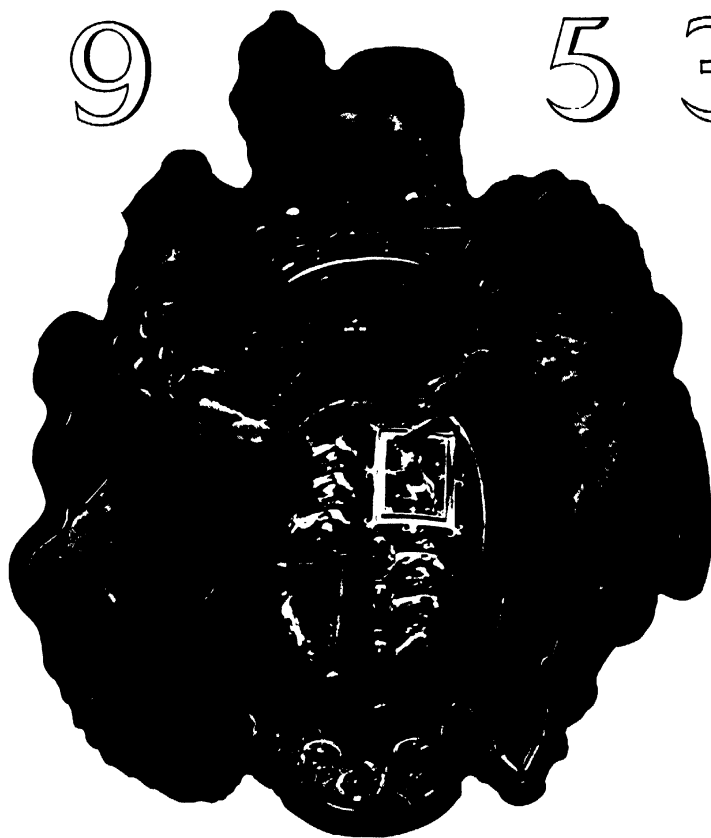


THE HAPPY RETURN

CORONATION DAY

19

53



Howard Marshall

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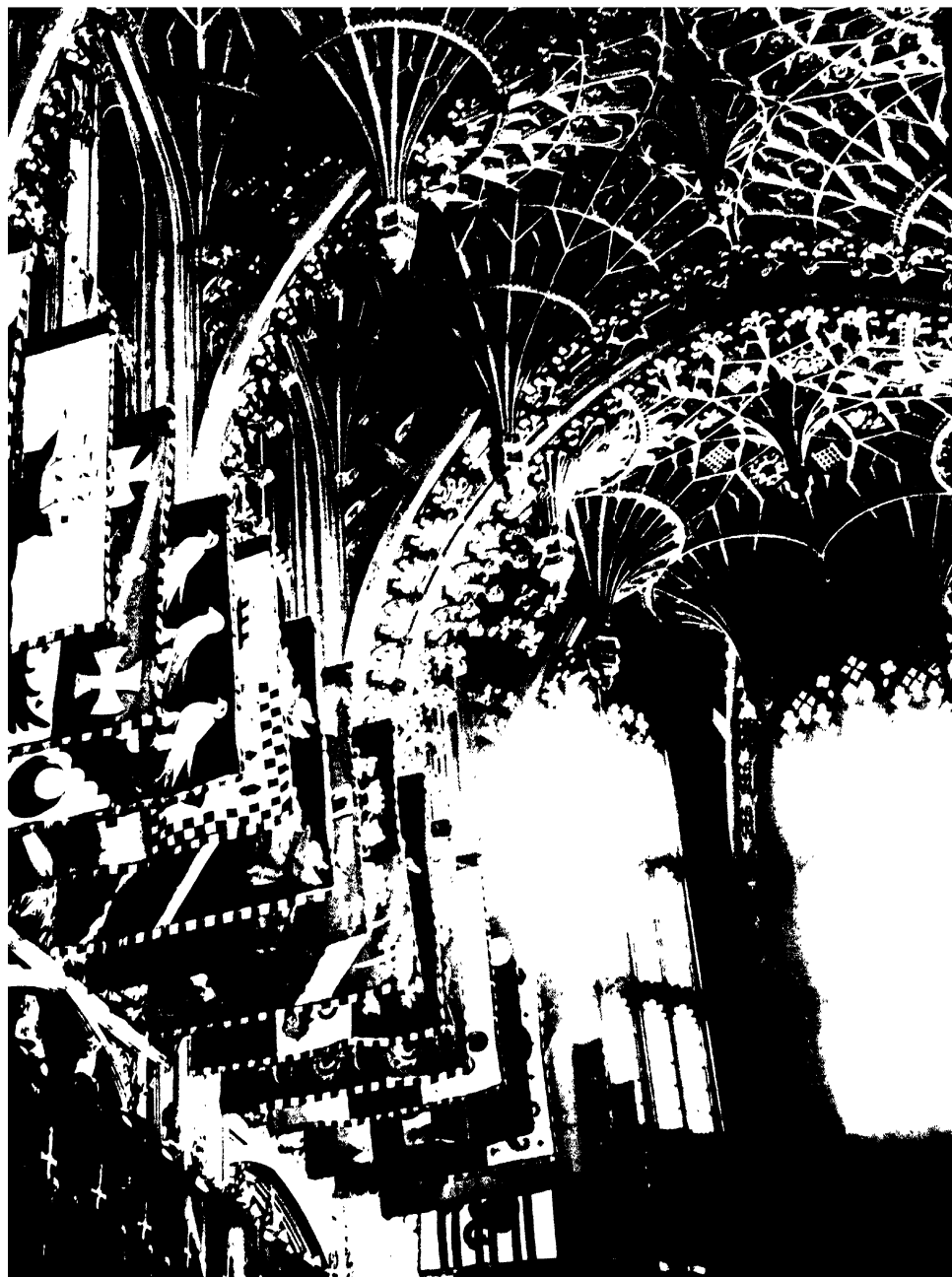
Watford

 O GOD the Crown of the faithful: Bless we beseech thee
this Crown, and so sanctify thy servant ELIZABETH +
upon whose head this day thou dost place it for a sign of royal majesty.
that she may be filled by thine abundant grace with all princely +
virtues: through the King Eternal Jesus Christ Our Lord. AMEN.



A.D. IV NON JUN
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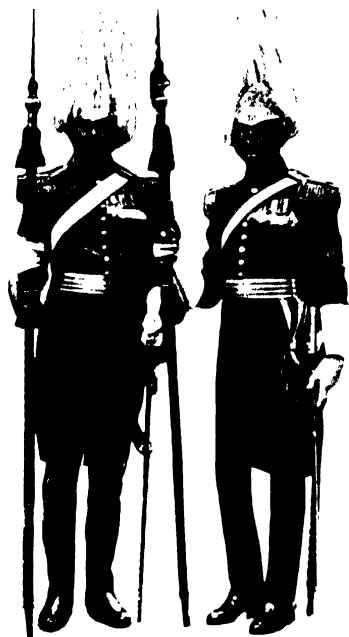




The Splendour of some
CORONATION COSTUMES



- a* Archbishop of Canterbury
- b* Lord High Chancellor
- c* Gentlemen-at-Arms
- d* A Peer's Page
- e* Richmond Herald
- f* Robes worn by members of the
Most Noble Order of the Garter
- g* Full dress uniform of a Knight
Grand Cross of the Most
Honourable Order of the Bath



c



e



d



f



g



CORONATION DAY broke grey and dull. From my window in Whitehall I could see the waters of the Thames whipped into waves by a cold wind. Even so, at four o'clock, people were hurrying along the Embankment to take up their places on the route; and when a little after five, on my way to the Abbey I turned into Whitehall, the crowd along the pavements was solid. There were people who had slept there all night, despite the rain and the cold, and many who had taken up their positions two nights before.

As I walked along the roadway, past the Cenotaph, loud-speakers in the trees suddenly began to play festive music, and the crowds joined in, singing most cheerfully. There was a feeling of expectancy everywhere. Parliament Square with its banners and heraldic devices, with the towers of Westminster Abbey and St. Margaret's beyond it, was like a medieval city.

Already, as I came to my entrance to the Abbey, cars were drawing up and men and women in robes and uniforms of every kind were making their way under the canvas-covered aisles. We were all too early; Gold Stick officers told us that we must wait. We stood about in little groups, looking as if we were going to a fancy dress ball, until suddenly the news

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that the British Expedition had climbed Everest began to spread like a prairie fire. Everyone talked about it, everyone felt what a remarkable augury this was for Coronation Day—what a Coronation gift for our Queen.

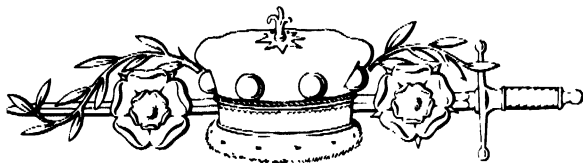
At last we were allowed to move and I climbed the apparently unending steps of a spiral stone staircase where someone had forgotten to turn on the light; but that was the only darkness of a day which shone with wonder.

Up in the triforium, there was great activity. In addition to our broadcasting position in the central window, there were television and film cameras, and soon after six o'clock tests of every kind began.

I sat in my small box—it had barely five feet of head-room—and looked through a plate-glass window over the whole length of the Abbey, across the High Altar to the Theatre and beyond, then down the choir and over the organ loft to the West Door in the shadowy distance.

At this time only a few of the hundreds of arc lamps were alight, and only an occasional Gold Stick officer showed any visitors to their places. The great Abbey held the peace and tranquillity of centuries. The golden and blue fabrics were subdued, waiting for vivid life to be given to them by the lights which would pour down later in the day.

It was hard to believe that in a few hours' time we should be watching in this ancient shrine the greatest spectacle in the world.



As the hours passed, the Abbey scene grew in majesty and beauty. Piece by piece the details of living mosaic fell into place as the glittering company assembled. The Regalia were borne in from the Jerusalem

Chamber by the Abbey clergy, flashing cold fire in Crown and Orb and Sceptre. The processions of the Princes and Princesses of the Blood Royal brought to the scene its first thrill of majesty, with the Heralds Bluemantle Pursuivant and Rouge Croix Pursuivant at their head. The royal arms emblazoned on their tabards made their own splash of magnificence.

And then, a small procession: that of the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. And as the Queen Mother passed the empty throne, she turned for a moment towards it, and then, preceded by the Lord Chamberlain of the Household, she entered the Royal Gallery; and there, overlooking the Theatre, she took her place with other members of the Royal Family.

Gently, delicately, colour spilled into the thousand-year-old church of Saint Peter in Westminster. I looked down to the High Altar, to the gold-carpeted platform, sixty yards long and fifty yards across, called the Theatre; I looked down to the rose-coloured Throne with its golden Royal Cipher, and to Saint Edward's Chair; to the Chair of Estate and the blue raised faldstool where presently the Queen herself would kneel in homage.

To the left, overlooking the Theatre, was the Royal Gallery; and opposite it the seats where the bishops waited. At each corner of the Theatre a massive fluted stone pillar supported the great arches which soared high into the shadowy recesses of the Abbey roof. Like giant forest trees they stood; and at their base were grouped the Great Officers of State and the Heralds in all their splendour.

Between them, to the left and right in the south and north transepts, were the galleries, hung with blue fabric-- the blue of a summer sea-- where sat the peers and peeresses in their crimson robes with capes of white miniver. Tier upon tier they sat, a mass of snowy white and crimson barred with blue, rising to the great rose windows of the Abbey.

Beyond the Theatre, a broad pathway of that same sea-blue led through Choir and Nave to the West Door; and in the Choir stalls at the edge of the Theatre sat the royal guests, some in turbans, silks or

dark burnouses, representing countries on the far side of the globe. With them sat high dignitaries of foreign states, resplendent in their national dress, and the Prime Ministers of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

A familiar figure showed among this brilliant assembly: Sir Winston Churchill in the uniform of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, under the mantle of the Garter.

As I watched, and waited, a sudden burst of sunlight streamed through the Abbey windows and slanted across the Theatre. The drapings, the myriad gems and sparkling stones, the incomparable colours—all glowed and merged for a moment in iridescent beauty. The Abbey seemed roofless, infinite. Its old grey stone set off the glorious assembly in all its grandeur, as if a painter had slashed broad bands of colour on a dark canvas, and afterwards filled in the details of a massive pattern. All this was preparation for a moment yet to come—the arrival of the Queen.

In imagination I anticipated that supreme moment when, preceded by the Regalia, by Orb and Sceptre, by Standard and Banner, Her Majesty would enter with her own procession. Her officers of the Orders of Knighthood in mantles of Saxon blue or scarlet satin; the Great Officers of State in court dress; the scarlet-and-gold uniforms of the Gentlemen-at-Arms; the summit of pageantry which was to be the rich border for the solemn ritual then to follow.

Amid all the magnificence, the occasion was charged with a deep sense of devotion; for the externals were no more than adornments fitting for the greatest religious ceremony in our Book of Common Prayer. Again and again I felt my eye drawn to the quiet space at the heart of this wonderful pattern—to the Theatre before the High Altar, and to the lonely Chair set in the centre. There, six hundred years ago, the first Edward had been crowned; and soon now our own Queen Elizabeth, in the mid-twentieth century, would follow her ancestors' path

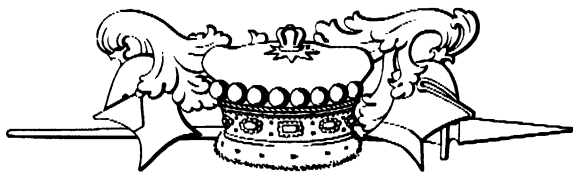
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to kingship with the same regalia, the same words of dedication to her God and to her peoples.

All the surrounding colours, all the robes and uniforms and splendour, served merely to frame this sacred spot and contain it—to draw our thoughts to its unadorned, its central simplicity. We waited at the still centre of our island's history, where soon another chapter would begin to unfold. That old oak chair standing empty below me had been used at every coronation since 1308; and our young Queen, now to be anointed there, would share its solitary dignity, alone in her high duty and devotion.

Beyond the Chair, standing against the great pillar in the south transept, I could see the glittering cloth of gold of the canopy, which four Knights of the Garter would hold over Her Majesty at the Anointing: another symbol of the pageantry which is more than pageantry, the splendour which is a spiritual accompaniment to a sacred act of grace, by means of which the Queen, by her own self-offering, would be brought by the actions and prayers of the Church into a new relationship with God and all her people.

And now—a stir at the Abbey door. A tremor of excitement which rippled through that noble congregation like a sudden breeze. The Queen had reached the Abbey on her Coronation Day.



Then, to a fanfare of trumpets which split the stillness like thrusts of a steel sword, the Queen appeared. Gravely she walked, her six attendant ladies bearing her train of crimson velvet, and the diadem upon her head sparkling with a thousand lights. As the anthem ceased, there sounded the exultant shout of "Vivat Regina Elizabetha!" from

the clear young voices of the Queen's scholars of Westminster School.

Orchestra, organ and trumpets heralded the entry of the Regalia; and as, one by one, the lords who bore them carried them to the Archbishop of Canterbury at the altar steps, the Queen knelt in prayer before her Chair of Estate. The Spurs, the Orb and Sceptre, the Rod, the Staff and Crown of Saint Edward were laid upon the altar cloth, passing now into the keeping of the Church.

The Queen rose and stood to the left of King Edward's Chair in readiness for The Recognition, and her Maids of Honour stooped to spread her crimson cloak along the carpet of rich gold. To each corner of the Abbey in turn the Archbishop then uttered his opening words: "Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Elizabeth, your undoubted Queen. Wherefore all you are come this day to do your homage and service, are you willing to do the same?" And from each side in turn rang back the joyous answer: "God Save Queen Elizabeth!" with a flourish of trumpets as triumphant punctuation. And each time, too, the Queen bowed in acknowledgement as the great shout rang throughout the Abbey.

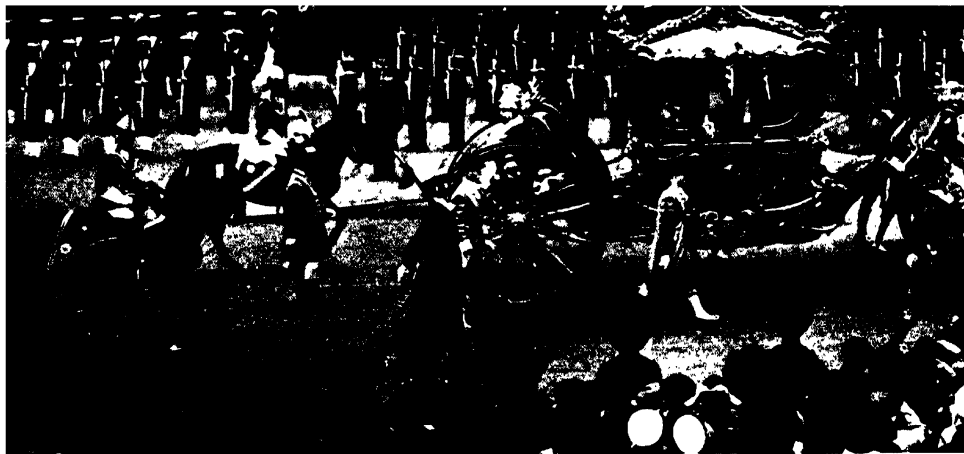
Standing before the Queen, the Archbishop then asked: "Madam, is your Majesty willing to take the Oath?" Clearly the young Queen's voice rose in answer: "I am willing." There followed the Archbishop's question whether the Queen would solemnly promise to govern all her peoples in all her realms and territories according to their respective laws and customs. Scarcely the Queen answered: "I solemnly promise so to do."

Again the Archbishop spoke: "Will you to the utmost of your power cause Law and Justice in mercy, to be executed in all your judgments? . . . Maintain the Laws of God? . . . The Protestant Reformed Religion?" . . . The Queen answered: "All this I promise to do."

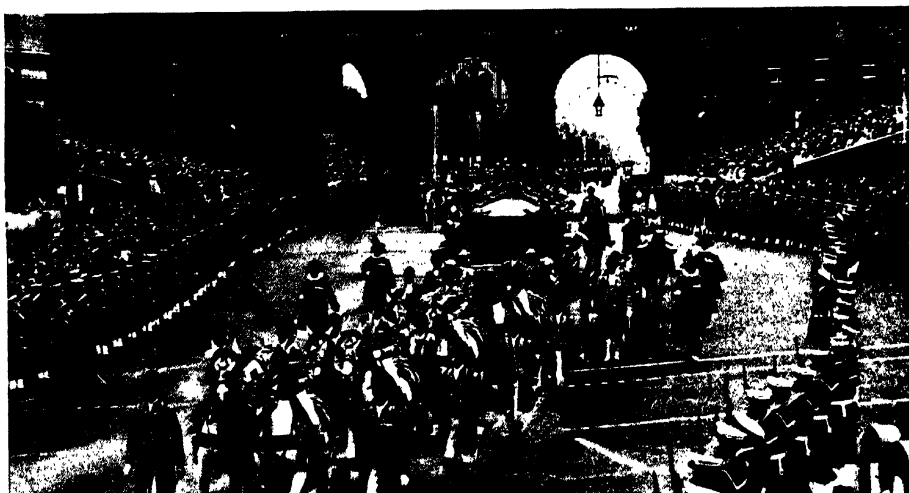
With her supporting Bishops—the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Bishop of Durham—the Queen now moved to the High Altar and laid her hand upon the Bible, where she confirmed her promise on her knees,

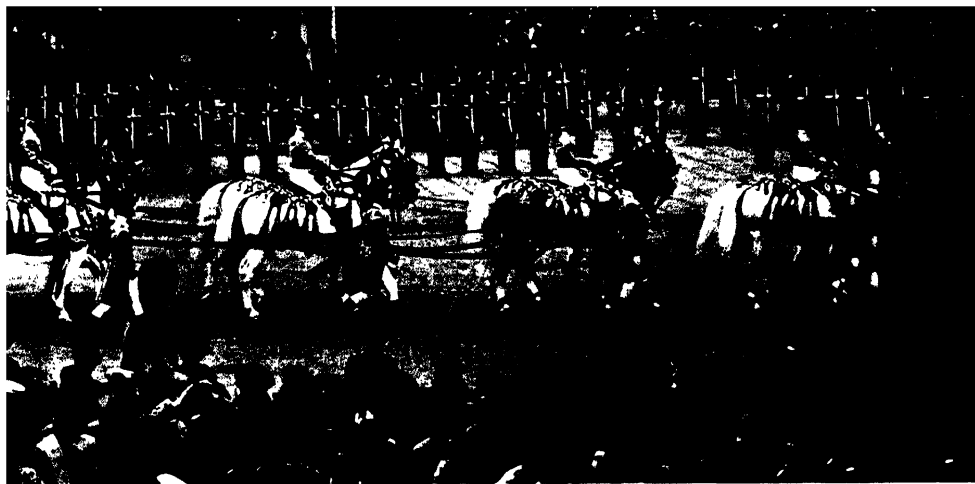


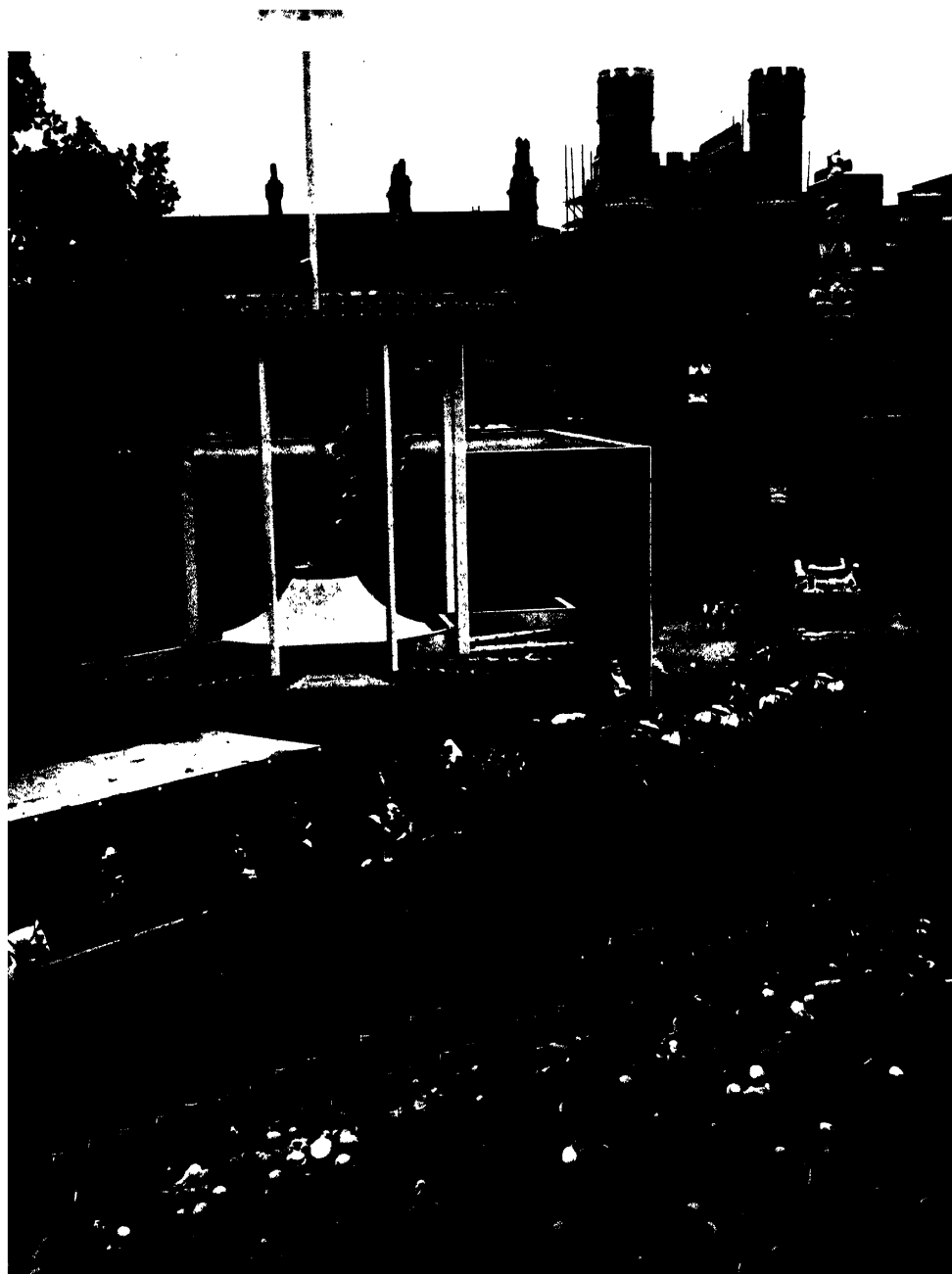
Her Majesty leaves Buckingham Palace for Westminster Abbey



*As the Coronation Coach
moves towards the Abbey two
small Royal faces are pressed
excitedly against the
Palace windows*



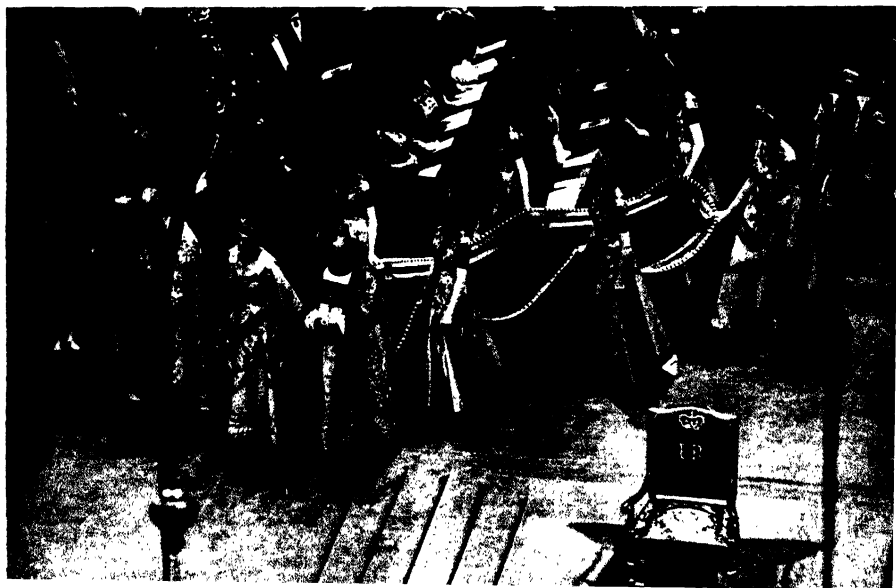






LEFT AND FACING PAGE.
The great moment of arrival
at the entrance to Westminster
Abbey

BELOW. With stately grace
the Queen moves to her
position, with the Bishop of
Durham on her right, the
Bishop of Bath and Wells on
her left, and her six Maids-
of-Honour bearing her train

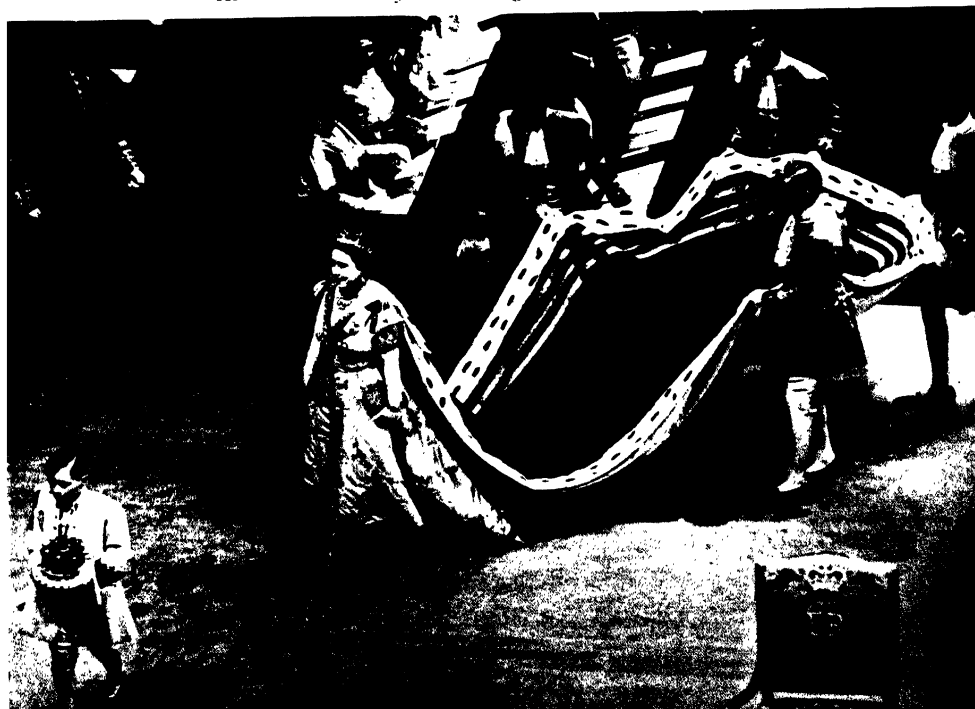




*Sir Winston Churchill, wearing his Garter robes,
preceded by the Commonwealth Prime Ministers, Mr. St. Laurent of Canada,
Mr. Menzies of Australia, Mr. Holland of New Zealand,
and Dr. Malan of South Africa*



ABOVE. The arrival of Princess Margaret and BELOW the Queen Mother





LEFT. *The Duchess of Kent
with her son and daughter*

RIGHT. *The Procession of the
Regalia through the Cloisters*

BELOW. *Her Majesty's Peers
with the Dukes of Gloucester
and Kent in the foreground*





*Prince Charles turns to ask his grandmother
Queen Elizabeth a question*



*Two pictures of the Queen
during the ceremony*



RIGHT. *The moment of crowning*

BELOW. *The Archbishop of Canterbury presenting the Orb*





*The Queen having been lifted
by the bishops and peers to the Throne
is wearing St. Edward's Crown, with the
Sceptre with Cross in her right hand,
the Rod with the Dove of Mercy
in her left, and flanked by
Peers and Officers of State*





RIGHT. *Her Majesty prepares to receive homage after the crowning*

BELOW. *'I, Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God'*



saying: "The things which I have here before promised I will perform and keep. So help me God." Reverently she kissed the Bible, then signed a copy of the Oath.

Now, for the first time in history, came a departure from the order of the service. The Dean of Westminster handed the Bible to the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who walked with the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Queen. Together they charged her with it, "the most valuable thing that this world affords." The Moderator himself added the ancient words: "Here is Wisdom; this is the royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God."

Already the vast Abbey was charged with a strange and moving solemnity; yet the Anglican service itself was only now to begin. The prayers and gospels of the first part of the Communion Service followed, and the familiar words gained that day a deeper significance. And at this moment a stir of movement in the Royal Gallery caught my eye: Prince Charles, Duke of Cornwall, had been brought to join the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret. He watched intently, his chin between his hands; and when a foot-stool was brought to help him see over the barrier, I saw that he was wearing a blouse of white silk, laced at the cuffs. From time to time he turned his head to ask a question of his grandmother. Bending her head to his, and sometimes smiling at his questions, the Queen Mother explained the ceremony to him.

But the moment drew near for the Anointing. As the choir ended the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus", the Queen still kneeling, the Archbishop prayed for her with his hand upon the ampulla lying on the altar. The next instant the choir sang the opening bars of Handel's anthem "Zadok the Priest"—an anthem which in various settings has been sung at every coronation since that of King Edgar in the year 973—and the Queen rose from her knees. She took off her diadem, and then the Lord Great Chamberlain and the Mistress of the Robes divested her of her train, and of her sparkling collar and precious stones. With all this

magnificence now put aside, standing as it were shorn of the trappings of majesty and clad in a plain white robe, the Queen yet looked more than ever the most regal figure in that glittering assembly. Gravely she walked to King Edward's Chair, while four heralds and four Knights of the Garter stepped forward to bear the cloth of gold canopy which was to shield the sacred rite of the Anointing from the congregation's eyes. From the eagle's beak of the ampulla the Dean poured holy oil into the silver spoon; and then, in words which all could hear, the Archbishop pronounced the blessing which made of Her Majesty a Queen in the sight of God.

A Queen . . . but not yet crowned a Queen. From this moment the austerity at the Queen's communion gave place to increasing splendour. The Mistress of the Robes slipped the plain white dress from her shoulders, and invested her instead with the Colobium Sindonis and the Supertunica and Girdle of cloth of gold. Before she returned to King Edward's chair the Queen stood still, for a moment miraculously transformed: slender and sheathed in gold—shimmering—wondrous.

Now she could receive all her emblems of majesty: the Sword of State, the Armills, the Stole Royal and the Robe Royal, the Orb, the Sceptre and the Queen's Ring. With the jewelled sword which represents the Sword of State the Queen advanced to the altar, where she surrendered it, delivering her temporal power into the hands of God. Then, also symbolically, Lord Salisbury redeemed the Sword with a bag containing one hundred freshly minted shillings. As the shining emblems passed into her keeping, the Queen began to assume the full stature of monarchy, until, with the golden Sceptre in her right hand and the Rod in her left, she sat ready to receive the Crown itself.

In a voice which, for the first time, faltered with the intensity of his emotion, the Archbishop prayed over the single emblem which now remained upon the altar: "Bless, we beseech Thee, this Crown, and so sanctify thy servant Elizabeth, upon whose head Thou this day dost place

it for a sign of royal majesty that she may be filled by Thine abundant grace with all princely virtues. . . .”

Together the Prelates moved down to form a line in front of the Chair where the Queen sat. On a velvet cushion the Dean bore the Crown. In all the vast congregation of nearly 8,000 people there was no sound to disturb the sanctity of that moment.

The Archbishop raised the Crown between his hands and held it high above the Queen's head. For one tense moment he held it there, then lowered it to the Queen's head and removed his hands.

With a mighty sound the congregation cried “God Save The Queen!” There was a sweeping ripple of white gloves as the peers and peeresses donned their coronets; at once the trumpets raised their clamorous cry . . . and surely the whole listening world shared in this acclamation.

Beneath the great Crown the Queen's face was small, grave and beautiful. As the shouted words rang through the Abbey—no formal shouts but heartfelt greetings and homage to the Queen—as the cannon thundered their salute and the trumpets climbed to still more triumphant heights of exultation, she inclined her head, motionless at the climax of her greatest hour.

The acclamation died, and the Archbishop's voice was heard again: “God crown you with a Crown of glory and righteousness, that having a right faith and manifold fruit of good works, you may obtain the crown of an everlasting Kingdom, by the gift of Him whose Kingdom endureth for ever. . . .”

He led the Queen to the Throne on the dais, where the attendant Bishops, Knights and Officers raised her gently a few inches from the ground; symbolically, it was the combined power of Church and State which bore her to the seat from whence she shall rule her people. And then, in words scarcely changed for a thousand years, the Archbishop charged the Queen to “Stand firm, and hold fast from henceforth the seat

and state of royal and imperial dignity, which is this day delivered unto you". The rites of the Crowning were at an end; and the Archbishop knelt to her, the first to do her homage, his hands between hers.

And as he did so, the Bishops knelt too, vowing with him to be "faithful and true" to the Queen and to her "heirs and successors according to law". The Archbishop kissed the Queen's hand, and retired for the homage to proceed.

First came the Duke of Edinburgh, wearing the full dress uniform of Admiral of the Fleet beneath his crimson robes. On his knees he uttered the splendid words: "I, Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, do become your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God". He rose, touched the Crown, and stooping kissed the Queen on her left cheek. This done he retired backward and returned to his chair.

One by one the royal dukes and the peers stepped forward to follow the Archbishop and the Duke in homage: the Duke of Gloucester, the young Duke of Kent, the Earl Marshal, Duke of Norfolk on behalf of all the dukes present; the Marquis of Huntly, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Viscount Arbuthnott, the Lords Mowbray, Segrave and Stourton—each of them repeated the vow in his own name and on behalf of his fellow noblemen of the same degree.

When the last oath was sworn, to another flourish of trumpets we heard the full-hearted cry: "God Save Queen Elizabeth! Long Live Queen Elizabeth! May the Queen Live for ever"! And as the acclamation sounded, the Archbishop moved slowly to the altar in readiness to resume the Communion Service.

Pageantry was forgotten. It dropped away into the background, fell into perspective like the enamelled setting of a precious stone, and the service became intensely personal. Our eyes and thoughts were only upon that narrow space where one human being—our Queen—at the centre of her peoples—in sight and sound of millions, but still alone, held com-

munion with God, was consecrated, dedicated herself to the service of her peoples, irrevocably set her young life apart. ~

Now the choir began a well-loved hymn, the Old Hundredth, "All People that on earth do dwell". For the first time all that congregation, and men and women listening the world over, could join in to sing their praise together.

As the hymn faded, the Queen went to the altar and delivered there the Crown, the Sceptre and the Rod to the Lord Great Chamberlain, and knelt down. She made her offering, an altar-cloth and an ingot of pure gold, and the Archbishop took them and laid them on the altar. The Duke of Edinburgh, meanwhile, had left his place to kneel at his faldstool beside her.

The Archbishop then led a prayer for the Duke "who with all humble devotion offers himself for Thy service in the dignity to which Thou hast called him. Defend him from all dangers, ghostly and bodily; make him a great example of virtue and godliness, and a blessing to the Queen and her Peoples. . . ."

Then followed a prayer "for the whole estate of Christ's church militant here on earth"; and we heard an exquisite motet, composed by Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams for unaccompanied voices.

Now the Communion was over. The Queen donned her Crown again, and bearing the Sceptre and the Rod she returned to the Throne. Loud rang the "Gloria in Excelsis"; the Archbishop pronounced the Benediction; and the solemnities were concluded.

And then, the soaring beauty of Sir William Walton's *Te Deum* being ended, Her Majesty passed through the door on the South side of the altar into St. Edward's Chapel, the thirteenth-century shrine built to the memory of Edward the Confessor, and, assisted by the Mistress of the Robes and attended by the Lord Great Chamberlain, was arrayed in her Robe of Purple Velvet.

Meanwhile below us the great procession, in which Her Majesty

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would leave the Abbey, was being formed—and the whole Theatre and the Choir became a swirling kaleidoscope of brilliant colour.

The Chaplains and Prebendaries of Westminster in their scarlet cassocks, with the golden Cross of Westminster borne before them, moved away from the Theatre. The Queen's Bodyguard of Gentlemen-at-Arms lined the choir in their red tunics and blue trousers, trimmed with gold, the long plumes of swans' feathers cascading from their helmets.

Then the Officers of the Orders of Knighthood gathered, in the sweeping robes of their Orders; the scarlet satin mantles of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, their Prelate in his Saxon blue mantle lined with scarlet silk, the Order of the Thistle with their Gentleman Usher in a mantle of green satin. Next I saw the Knights of the Garter, who had held the Canopy, wearing their Garter mantles, blue over red velvet surcoats, cloth of silver trunks and doublet, white silk hose and white shoes with silver rosettes, and the blue velvet Garter with the golden letters round the left knee. The Chancellor of the Order of the Garter wore a dark blue velvet mantle, lined with white silk.

And leading each Order of Knighthood were the Gentlemen Ushers of the Purple Rod, the Blue Rod and the Green Rod, and then the bearers of the Standards of Ceylon, South Africa, Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand, Canada, the Union Standard, the Standard of the Principality of Wales, and the Royal Standard, borne by Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery. All these bearers would take up their Standards in the nave beyond the organ screen, where their pages waited with them ready.

Gradually the procession formed on both sides of the Throne. The Heralds had left their position by the great pillars and taken their appointed places; the Prime Ministers of the Members of the Commonwealth moved from the choir stalls to join the procession, most prominent among them being Sir Winston Churchill in the Mantle of the Garter, turning his massive head to take a last look at the Throne, the Coronation Chair and the High Altar.

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Behind him followed the Cross of York and the Archbishop of York in mitre and cope; the Lord High Chancellor, wearing his coronet over his wig and a black mantle, gold embroidered, bearing a purse embellished with the Royal Arms, and then, carried high, the Cross of Canterbury, and following it slowly over the Theatre the Archbishop of Canterbury, his golden mitre shining under the candelabra. And then, taking his place the Duke of Edinburgh, followed by his midshipman page.

Next came the Serjeants-at-Arms, carrying great gilt maces, and the Heralds of Richmond and York, Chester and Lancaster, and after them the swords; the Sword Spiritual, the Sword Temporal, Curtana, the blunt Sword of Mercy, borne by the Duke of Northumberland, the three Swords moving abreast; following them Norroy and Ulster King of Arms and Clarenceux King of Arms in their tabards and Garter Principal King of Arms, his coronet tasselled in rose.

The Lord Mayor of London, bearing the Crystal Sceptre, part of it made in Saxon times, the Lord Great Chamberlain, the Lord High Steward of Ireland and the High Constable of Scotland, the Great Steward of Scotland, all took their places, while interspersed in the procession were the pages attending the peers and peeresses—twelve to fifteen years old—wearing the livery colours of those they attended, claret or murrey or blue, the Royal pages only in scarlet, and all of them in white breeches and stockings, lace cravats and ruffles, and wearing swords. What a day for the pages to look back upon!

And we remembered the flash of the golden Armills, the Commonwealth gift, “the bracelets of sincerity and wisdom”—how they had glinted as the Archbishop of Canterbury clasped them on her Majesty’s wrists—and the brilliance of the Orb as it was placed in Her Majesty’s hand—and how the Star of Africa diamond in the Sceptre with the Cross had shone against the old oak of the Coronation Chair.

All those wonderful robes and uniforms intermingled down below, moving over the golden and the blue carpets, moving round the rose and

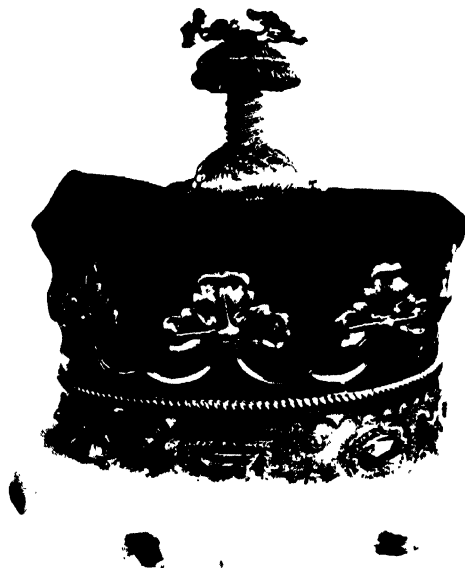
gold throne, framed by the massed crimson and white of the robes of peers and peeresses and the blue fabrics, moving under the golden Royal Gallery, where the Queen Mother waited to see her daughter proceed towards the West door, towards her people in the London streets.

And then the moment for which we were all waiting—the Queen’s reappearance—and how exquisitely lovely she was, arrayed in her robe of purple velvet, wearing the Imperial State Crown and carrying the Sceptre with the Cross and the Orb, the jewelled cross shining like a star even in all that splendour. The Queen emerged from St. Edward’s Chapel through the South Door of the Altar Screen. Soon she passed the Royal Gallery where she turned her head towards the Queen Mother and approached the Throne, her glorious purple train borne by the six Maids of Honour in their white satin dresses encrusted with gold and silver, and following them the Mistress of the Robes, the Groom of the Robes, the Ladies of the Bedchamber, the Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom, the Master of Horse, the Gold Stick-in-Waiting.

Then, as the Queen reached the Throne, came the sudden glory of fanfares and the National Anthem, followed by Elgar’s first Pomp and Circumstance, rising crescendo to his “Land of Hope and Glory”.

Amid this swirl of glorious music, Her Majesty moved between the choir stalls, and I saw preceding her the long procession stretching towards the West door; over the organ loft in the distant shadows the glint of light on coronet and helmet, on sword and sceptre, on proudly borne Standards.

Slowly the procession divided in the nave to pass round the tomb of the Unknown Warrior and move out of the Abbey. And so, while we watched the Great Proceeding flowing slowly from us, while we watched Her Majesty, gracious, dignified, beautiful indeed in this great hour of her life—of our lives—while we watched her moving into history, as so short a while ago she had moved into her secure place in all our hearts, so in all loyalty and devotion we sent with her our prayers for her safe-



CORONATION OF HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH II

By Command of The Queen

the Earl Marshal is directed to invite

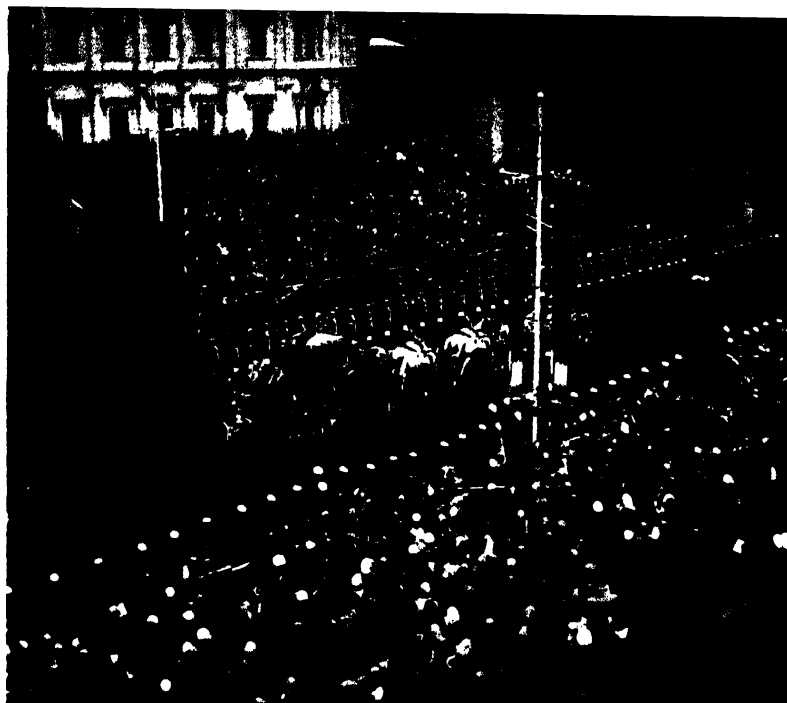
to be present at the Abbey Church of
Westminster on the 2nd day of June 1953



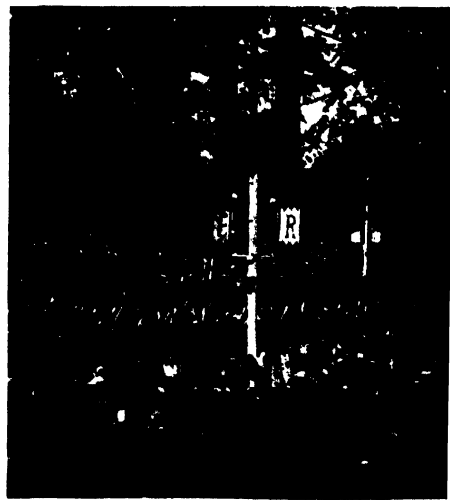
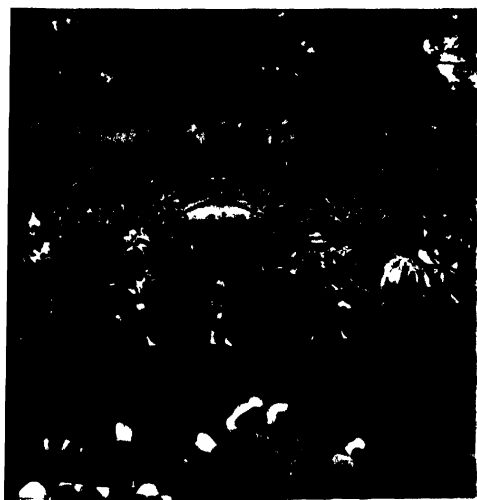
W. Folke.

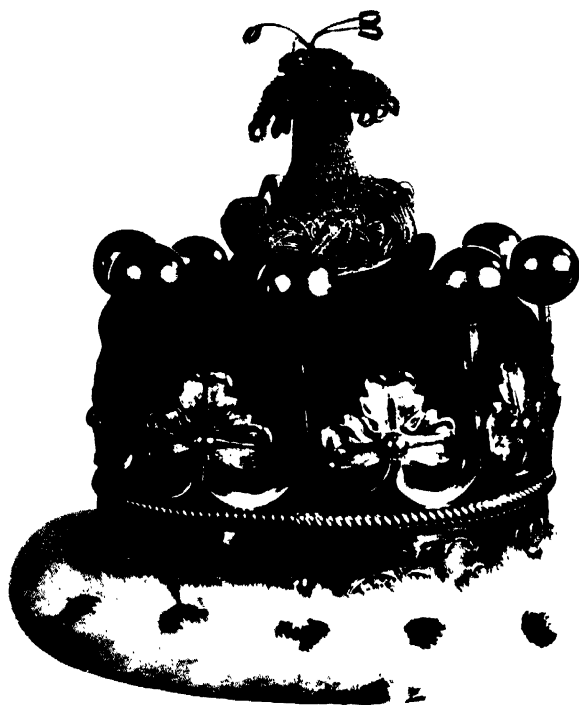
Earl Marshal





COLOURFUL SCENES ON CORONATION DAY.





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keeping and her happiness and the rich fulfilment of her high destiny.

We remembered how she had borne herself throughout the service. Beyond her springtime loveliness and her manifest humility before God, we remembered her absorbed attention.

I see her now, that slight figure kneeling alone before the Altar making her private devotions, her face bowed, and I recall the King, her father, in that same moment and how he also impressed upon us a profound sense of purpose and dedication. These great responsibilities she accepted gladly. Here was no anxious entry into an uneasy heritage. Here was a serenely assured human being who affirmed before the world the eternal values which she knew to be true, and by which she would willingly be guided for the rest of her days.

It is, I think, not fanciful to say that down there on that golden carpet of the Theatre, in all the complex ritual movements of Recognition, The Oath, The Anointing, The Crowning, The Homage—in all this ceremonial we could feel, in the central figure of the Queen, her personal quality. There was about her something shining.

As the Queen disappeared through the West Door into the Annexe, a temporary pavilion erected for assembly, the Abbey seemed suddenly deserted. The congregation began to disperse. The colour drained out of gallery and nave. Gold Stick Officers took charge, and crimson robe and court dress moved slowly into the rain.

It was time to go. I was so stiff that I could hardly stand, and this surprised me until someone explained that I had been sitting in my sound-proof hut with hardly room to stir for nearly nine hours. A long time, but I had not noticed it. Always something had been happening to hold the attention, and the mounting excitement of the service had turned hours into minutes.

Those who had to describe the scene were constantly occupied in preparation and selection. There was so much to be condensed into our brief radio commentaries that at times the task seemed overwhelming.

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When at last it was over, and there was nothing to do but gather up our notes, there might have been a feeling of anti-climax. Instead the wonder held. As I made my way down the stone staircase and into the tented exit which led from the South transept, I passed officials already busy dismantling radio and telephone equipment. There was a sense of elation everywhere. All the planning and rehearsal had been worth while. The small failure, human or mechanical, which could have isolated the Abbey, had been avoided. Television cameramen relaxed, and Gold Stick Officers looked benevolently upon the dwindling congregation. An engineer emerged from a canvas hut and offered me a cup of tea. An Abbey official expatiated with enthusiasm upon the ventilation system. The lustre of a great occasion was upon us all. We moved in the after-glow of history.

As I came out, blinking in the daylight, I realized that my eyes burned fiercely. I had been staring for hours into the Abbey arc-lamps without noticing it. I paused opposite the Statue of Richard Cœur de Lion, under the awning where the crimson robes and the court dresses waited for their cars. It was drizzling. The roadway shone like a river. In the distance we could hear bands, where the procession began to move so far away, and the sound merged into our dream. Among the peers and the judges, the heralds and the Gentlemen-at-Arms I saw an immense negro standing on the pavement's edge. He wore one felt slipper and one brown shoe and what appeared to be a voluminous bathrobe. He stood as motionless as the statue across the road, his superb head tilted backwards, his eyes staring into the lowering sky. The wonder of the service held him still.

So gradually we went our ways, while in the Annexe the Queen prepared to meet her people and the Earl Marshal waited to escort her from the Abbey.

A gleam of sunshine—one of the very few that chilly day—greeted the Queen when she stepped into the people's view. As she entered the

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State Coach a fanfare sounded, the National Anthem was played, the Duke of Edinburgh took his place at her side, and the triumphal procession through seven miles of London's streets to Buckingham Palace had begun.

It was a procession such as London has rarely seen. Its vanguard was two miles away in Hyde Park; and as it stepped off to the strains of a military march it extended back through Piccadilly, St. James's and Trafalgar Square to Whitehall and Westminster.

Of the ten thousand servicemen and servicewomen taking part, some two thousand were from the Dominions and a further five hundred from the Colonies. Ten abreast the great procession marched to the music of twenty-seven bands. At the head marched four troopers of the Household Cavalry; and among the leading bands was that of the 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment—a name to which new lustre has been added by the heroic stand at Imjin in Korea.

Then came the Colonial contingents, represented first by the policemen of Cyprus, the Solomon Islands, Trinidad, the Bahamas, the Windward Islands, North Borneo, Sarawak and the Federation of Malaya. Close behind marched units of the various Colonial Navy, Army and Air Forces, flashes on their shoulders.

After them the Commonwealth—Southern Rhodesia, Ceylon, Pakistan, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, and Canada—and among them the superbly mounted Royal Canadian Police drew a special cheer. The Royal Air Force followed; and then the Army, led by a detachment of the Home Guard.

Glorious were the colours of the Army uniforms: reds and golds and whites and blues, sometimes above bare knees, sometimes with head-dresses of barbaric splendour. The Gurkhas were there; so were the massed pipers of the Irish and Scottish Regiments. So, too, were the pipers of the Pakistan Army, adding their own exotic touch to the parade.

As always, the Royal Marines thrilled the crowd to a rising crescendo of applause. They were followed by the Women's Royal Naval Service

and a solid, swinging mass of Navy blue—a phalanx of sailors doggedly marching in a sea mist. And then the Foot Guards and the King's Troop of the Royal Horse Artillery, with clattering gun carriages, pulled by eager chestnuts in their gleaming summer coats.

In the procession of Colonial Rulers rode the Sultans of Lahej, Selangor, Brunei, Johore, Perak and Zanzibar. And then, a sight which drew forth the loudest cheers of the procession so far: the Queen of Tonga, riding with the Sultan of Kelantan, defying the rain in an open carriage, gracefully waving and smiling.

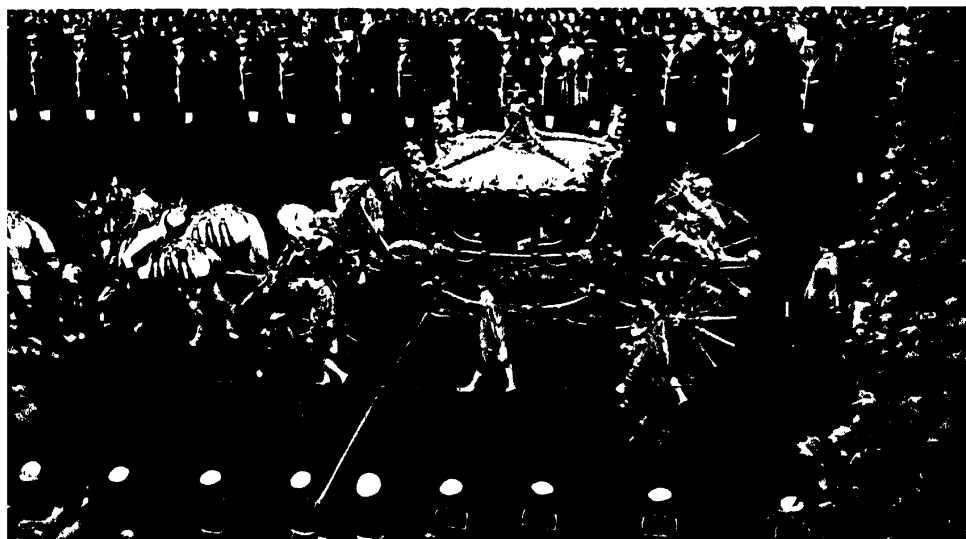
The Prime Ministers followed in closed carriages, and a steadily rising roar heralded the approach of Sir Winston and Lady Churchill, escorted by a detachment of the Fourth Queen's Own Hussars. A brief pause, and then we saw the Carriage Procession of Princes and Princesses of the Blood Royal; the Lady Patricia Ramsay; Princess Alice and the Earl of Athlone; Princess Marie Louise; the Duchess of Kent, the Duke, Princess Alexandra and their young brother; the Princess Royal; the Duchess of Gloucester and her young sons. The Queen Mother and Princess Margaret followed in the Glass Coach, escorted by a Captain's escort of the Household Cavalry. Her Majesty's own procession brought up the rear. Physicians, Surgeons, Nursing Sisters, Chaplains, Service Aides-de-Camp, Staff Officers, Admirals, Field Marshals, the Chiefs of Staff—these led the way. Behind them came the Queen's escort of officers from the Colonial and Commonwealth contingents; the Yeomen of the Guard; the Queen's Barge-master and Watermen; the Sovereign's Escort . . . and then, drawn by eight grey horses, the State Coach itself.

All along the route, as the Queen's coach passed, the thunderous roar of greeting drowned the slow clip-clop of the Windsor Greys. Radiant, smiling now, the Queen acknowledged the tumult with bowing head and gestures of her white-gloved hand. Indeed at some street corners spontaneous singing broke out after the Queen had passed: Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory—and, over and again, the National Anthem.

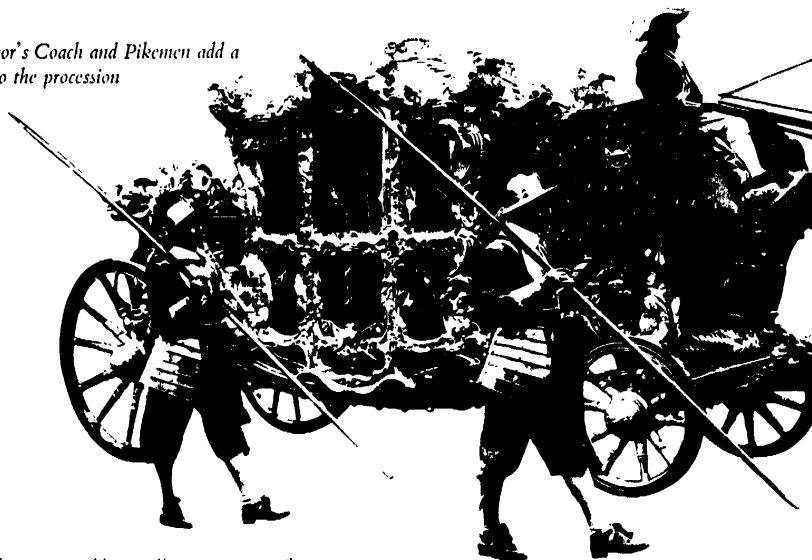




*Leaving the Abbey. The Queen begins her
radiant return to the Palace*

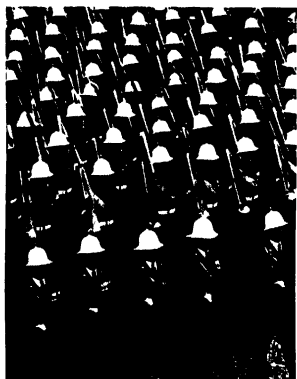
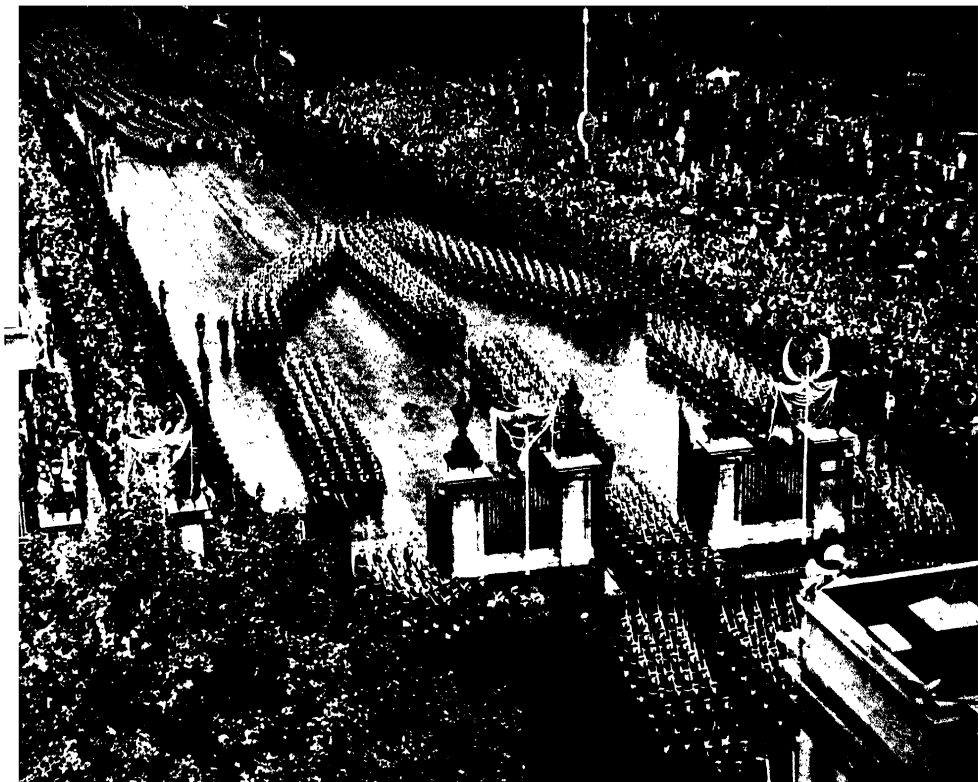


The Lord Mayor's Coach and Pikemen add a colourful note to the procession



To celebrate, the Honourable Artillery Company fire a 62-gun salute from the Tower of London



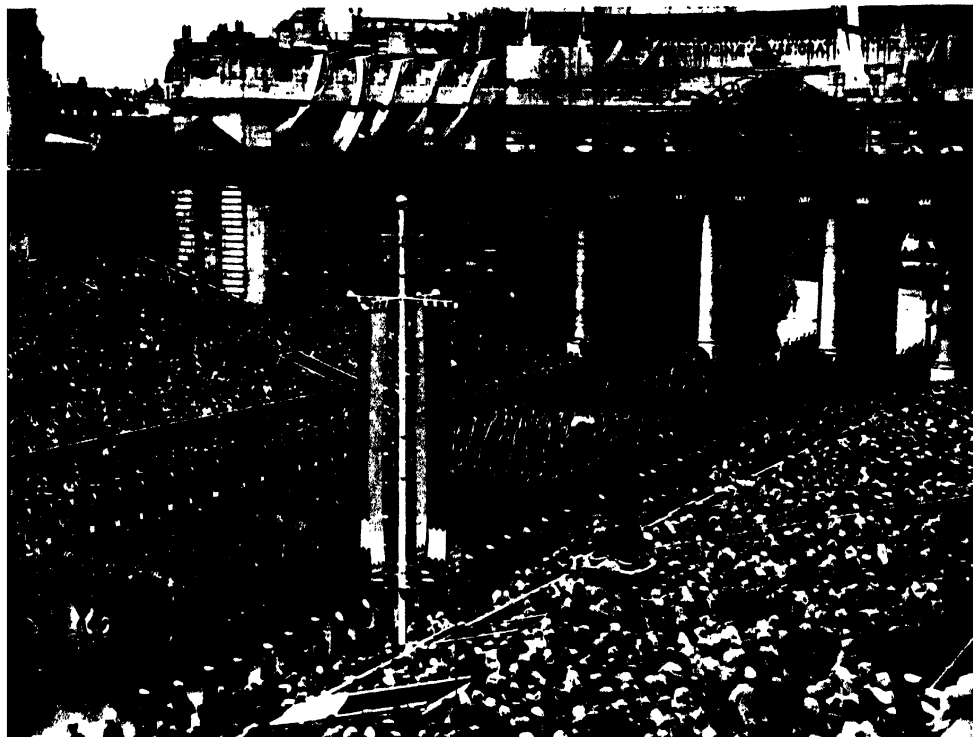
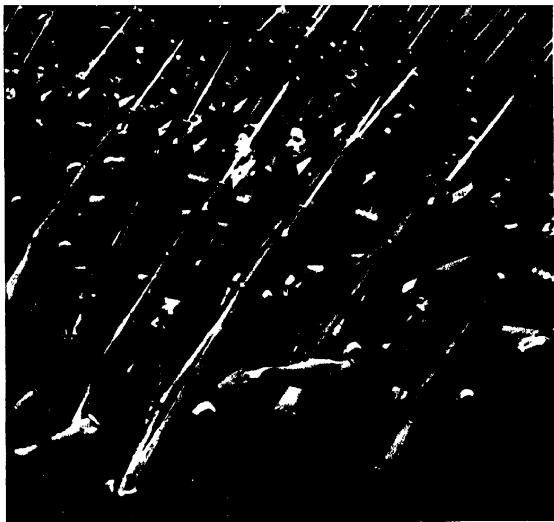


*The Services parade
their disciplined glory in
the Coronation Procession*





*Men from the Commonwealth
proudly march with their Queen*





On the Balcony of Buckingham Palace after the return

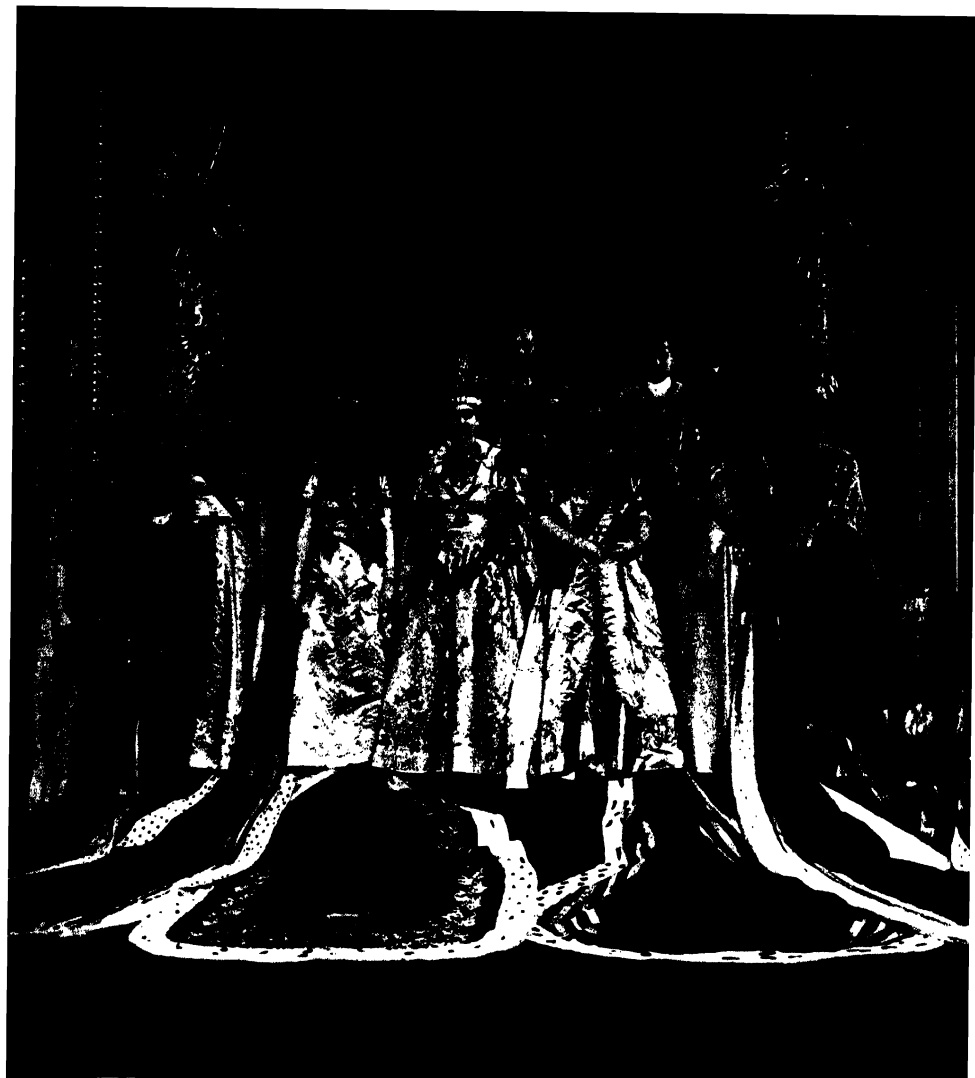




Indeed a Royal Occasion







The Royal Family

CORONATION DAY

It was this moment, the moment when the Queen passed, that the cold, rain-soaked millions had waited for. Already relays from the Abbey, and the procession, had re-kindled their excitement and unquenchable good humour. Beside this moment, when for a few brief seconds their own Queen passed their way, the discomforts and fatigue of the long vigil on the pavement were forgotten. Coronation Day became for them the people's day; and by the heartfelt warmth of their acclamation they established as of ancient right their own part in that historic ceremony.

And so to the last drive down the Mall, to her home at Buckingham Palace.

Here was a crowd which had taken up its position at least twenty-four hours before. It had been cold and wet, but never miserable. It had struck up a comradeship with the more fortunate viewers in the covered stands behind. When the rains began to fall, viewers there had passed down their umbrellas to the people on the pavement; and when the weather cleared they were all passed back again to their owners. Someone in the stands called for three cheers for "the people on the pavement". The cheers were given, whereupon the pavements in their turn gave three cheers for "the people in the stands".

Then the crowds in the Mall prepared to give the Queen the last tremendous ovation of her triumphant drive. They did so; and, as the coach drew into the Palace, they surged forward to the railings in an irresistible tide.

As they came flooding onwards there arose a resounding chant: "We Want The Queen! We Want The Queen!". And soon, to what must have been the greatest cheer so far on that great day of cheers, the Queen appeared. She was wearing the Imperial State Crown and her Coronation robes. Alone on the balcony she greeted and thanked her people.

After a minute there appeared the Duke of Edinburgh, with Prince Charles and Princess Anne. The cheering redoubled in wave upon wave;

and suddenly the Queen Mother was there too, and a huge roar of greeting broke out.

Then came the sound of approaching aircraft—the familiar but still thrilling scream of jet fighters heading from afar to make their own salute. Three groups of twenty-four Meteors first roared overhead, followed by a group of Sabres of the Royal Canadian Air Force, then by a further formation of twenty-four Meteors, and the Royal party intently followed their flight. The planes passed; and for ten minutes longer the Royal party stood smiling and waving to the cheering crowd. From all corners of the city the people poured, forming a mass of 50,000 waving, shouting, singing citizens, many of them not even in sight of the Palace.

Twice the Royal couple turned as if to make their way indoors; and each time renewed roars caused them to turn, smiling, back to the balcony. But at last they retired, and an announcement over the loudspeakers told the multitude that the Queen would reappear two hours later, at 9.45, when she would switch on the illuminations.

Still the people waited. The places of those who were by now too cold, wet or exhausted to cram any more into this crowded day were taken by newcomers, and the huge crowd waited as cheerfully and as excitedly as before.

In the greatest good humour, sustained by a universal sense of pride and comradeship, the crowd waited again for their Queen. But first they were to hear her voice, relayed as she made her broadcast to the world from Buckingham Palace. A great hush settled as the clear young voice spoke to all her peoples, and to the world.

“When I spoke to you last, at Christmas, I asked you all, whatever your religion, to pray for me on the day of my Coronation—to pray that God would give me wisdom and strength to carry out the promises that I should then be making.

“Throughout this memorable day I have been uplifted and sustained by the knowledge that your thoughts and prayers were with me. I have

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been aware all the time that my peoples, spread far and wide throughout every Continent and ocean in the world, were united to support me in the task to which I have now been dedicated with such solemnity.

"Many thousands of you came to London from all parts of the Commonwealth and Empire to join in the ceremony, but I have been conscious too of the millions of others who have shared in it by means of wireless or television in their homes.

"All of you, near or far, have been united in one purpose. It is hard for me to find words in which to tell you of the strength which this knowledge has given me.

"The ceremonies you have seen today are ancient, and some of their origins are veiled in the mists of the past. But their spirit and their meaning shine through the ages never, perhaps, more brightly than now.

"I have in sincerity pledged myself to your service, as so many of you are pledged to mine. Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust.

"In this resolve I have my husband to support me. He shares all my ideals and all my affection for you. Then, although my experience is so short and my task so new, I have in my parents and grandparents an example which I can follow with certainty and with confidence.

"There is also this. I have behind me not only the splendid traditions and the annals of more than a thousand years, but the living strength and majesty of the Commonwealth and Empire, of societies old and new, of lands and races different in history and origins but all, by God's will, united in spirit and in aim.

"Therefore I am sure that this, my Coronation, is not the symbol of a power and a splendour that are gone, but a declaration of our hopes for the future, and for the years I may, by God's grace and mercy, be given to reign and serve you as your Queen.

"I have been speaking of the vast regions and varied peoples to whom I owe my duty, but there has also sprung from our island home a theme

of social and political thought which constitutes our message to the world, and through the changing generations has found acceptance both within and far beyond my realms.

"Parliamentary institutions, with their free speech and respect for the rights of minorities, and the inspiration of a broad tolerance in thought and its expression—all this we conceive to be a precious part of our way of life and outlook.

"During recent centuries, this message has been sustained and invigorated by the immense contribution, in language, literature and action, of the nations of our Commonwealth overseas. It gives expression, as I pray it always will, to living principles as sacred to the Crown and monarchy as to its many Parliaments and peoples.

"I ask you now to cherish them—and practise them too. Then we can go forward together in peace, seeking justice and freedom for all men.

"As this day draws to its close, I know that my abiding memory of it will be, not only the solemnity and beauty of the ceremony, but the inspiration of your loyalty and affection. I thank you all from a full heart. God bless you all."

The National Anthem was played and people everywhere stood to attention, heads bared.

But the festivities were by no means over. The Queen soon appeared again on the Palace balcony, the Duke at her side. And as she pressed a switch, a garland of lights shone through the darkness, and the huge golden crowns beneath the triumphal arches in the Mall seemed miraculously suspended in mid-air. A deep sigh of wonder came from the vast crowd, and again the shout went up from tens of thousands of voices: "God save the Queen! God save the Queen!"

On the South Bank a display of fireworks set the dark clouds ablaze in cascades of colour. There were set pieces of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, of Prince Charles and Princess Anne, and not until the last plume of golden rain died down the sky did the crowd disperse.



Cecil Beaton

God Save the Queen

CORONATION DAY

In London's West End parties sprang up everywhere. Complete strangers, American and Commonwealth visitors among them, struck up immediate friendships in the streets, in the pubs, in the crawling buses. Countesses, ambassadors, envoys, diplomats celebrated with soldiers, taxi-drivers, housewives, Wrens, in one enormous flourish of high spirits. In great homes and humble ones, in embassies and small front rooms, toasts were drunk to Her Majesty. All over the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth children stayed up a little later, most of them with some small Coronation gift to add to their treasures; and all of them with the Queen's own words of dedication fresh in their ears.

And so the great day drew to its close – a day of rejoicing and prayer, of love and loyalty, affirmed in all the people's hearts.

Sir Winston Churchill, rising as always to a great occasion, prefaced the Queen's broadcast that evening in words which burn with his own deep devotion:

"We have had a day which the oldest are proud to have lived to see, and which the youngest will remember all their lives. . . . The splendours of this Second of June glow in the minds. . . .

"Let it not be thought that the age of chivalry belongs to the past. Here, at the summit of our world-wide community, is the lady whom we respect because she is our Queen, and whom we love because she is herself. Gracious and noble are words familiar to us all in courtly phrasing. Tonight they have a new ring in them. . . .

"It is our dearest hope that the Queen shall be happy, and our resolve unswerving that her reign will be as glorious as her devoted subjects can help her to make it. We pray to have rulers who serve, to have nations who comfort each other, and to have peoples who thrive and prosper free from fear.

"May God grant us these blessings."

"The age of chivalry", said the Prime Minister, and there he was surely right. A renaissance of the spirit also, for on that day a great

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people found inspiration again, and made it manifest throughout the world.

This was a turning point in our long history. Of that I have no doubt. As after Dunkirk we stood alone and gathered ourselves to face the full ferocity of the Nazi challenge, so at our Queen's crowning we accepted and shared with her our full responsibilities.

We have a way of laughing at ourselves, of belittling our efforts, of mystifying the foreigner by self-deprecation, but on that day we held ourselves proudly. Personified in our Queen were centuries of achievement, and through our celebrations shone belief in our future. There was more here than an excuse for pageantry. In all our exuberant expression of loyalty there was a deep-rooted confidence. Our banner flew high above the darkness of the world.

We showed this in our own peculiar manner. The crowds who waited for two nights and a day joked about the rain and cold, but they endured cheerfully for something more than a glimpse of the Queen in her golden coach. They came to be part of the Coronation, to share in the ceremonial which affirmed our free way of life. They had hung out their flags and decorated their houses. They had journeyed uncomfortably and endured stoically, but all without compulsion. This spontaneous celebration was their voluntary offering to the Queen who dedicated herself to their service.

For those who were fortunate enough to be in the Abbey it was a profound experience. Never do I expect to see anything as beautiful or as moving again, and all this complex ceremonial was arranged not by some famous professional producer, some impresario accustomed to the stage management of great spectacles, but by amateurs.

In the main it was the work of the Duke of Norfolk, sustained and inspired by over a thousand years of history and tradition. The result was timeless, as if the grey walls of the old Abbey shut out the present, and enshrined for us the magical beauty of the ages. There was without

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doubt a magical quality about the scene, an element of wonder in those exquisitely massed colours, and the lovely young Queen at their centre, and as we watched, we realized that the enchanted imagination of children has a validity which we should be unwise to question. The fairy tale had become true once more, and for those few hours we ourselves became children again, and our innocence was renewed.

It might seem probable that on such an occasion the ceremonial, the glory of the music and the singing would distract the eyes and the mind from the central figure, the true meaning of the service. It was not so. All the surrounding pageantry and splendour merely provided a worthy setting for something far more splendid, far more moving—the personal dedication of one human being to such high responsibility. And I thought, as the service developed, of the loneliness of Sovereignty—a loneliness which all the friends and wise counsellors in the world can never wholly exorcise.

For eight hours I watched there in the Abbey, from my window high in the triforium. For eight hours I saw the slow tide of colour spilling over into every nook and cranny, the gradual unfolding of ancient ceremonial. And always my eyes returned to the square of golden carpet before the High Altar, where the Throne stood, and the oak chair of St. Edward—where for six hundred years kings and queens have been crowned.

It was towards this quiet centre of the storm of cheering and acclamation that the Queen drove in her shining coach through the streets of London, towards which she moved slowly up the Abbey in her glorious procession, to which at last she came to be alone with God.

On Coronation Day it was this simplicity at the heart of splendour which moved me so profoundly; and when perhaps the memory of robe and uniform, of sword and sceptre, of all the material emblems of majesty has dimmed a little with the years, there is one thing I shall not forget—a young Queen, so still, so purposeful, kneeling in prayer alone.





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